

Mali Plans New Sugar Plant

MARKALA, Mali—In order to free Mali from costly sugar imports, the Agency has formed a partnership to develop and grow new varieties of sugarcane and build a sugar processing factory capable of supplying the entire country.

With \$270 million at stake, USAID is working with the Mali government and Schaffer & Associates, a Louisiana-based firm, to irrigate land, plant high-quality sugarcane varieties, and build a processing plant.

“This is a very poor country that needs foreign investment desperately,” notes Pam White, USAID/Mali Mission Director.

In addition to meeting Mali’s requirements for sugar, the plant may generate exports, according to a U.S. Trade and Development Agency study.

USAID is contributing \$892,000 to help Mali’s National Agricultural Research Institute identify the most productive sugarcane varieties and ensure that environmental standards are met. Schaffer official Geralyn Contini noted, “Sugarcane research is the very heart of the preparatory stage, without which private investment would not be possible.”

In 1999, Schaffer won the State Department’s Award for Corporate Excellence for a Small/Medium Enterprise.

The Mali government is constructing irrigation canals, while Schaffer & Associates is raising up to \$270 million to construct the plant. The firm has built successful sugar processing plants in Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda. ★

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